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BRUSH AND PENCIL

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AN EPOCH IN NATIONAL ART

In these early years of the twentieth century, and at a time when the dominant nation of the Americas asserts herself on an equality with the centuries-old world powers, the student of progress pauses to question to what extent her achievements have been along purely material lines; if, in a word, the intellectual and æsthetic forces of civilization have kept pace with the triumphs of science and industry. Art does not readily adapt itself to new conditions. It is tenacious of formulæ and of established precedent and tradition; it harks back to the past, and lingers with the glamour and the dream. The kaleidoscopic changes in the action and color of the glaring present confuse the vision



LITTLE LOUISE
By Robert W. Vonnoh
Shown at St. Louis World's Fair

and the understanding, and impelled by his very nature the painter or sculptor retires to a world of the unreal in an enriched atmosphere of other times, rather than cope with the jarring motives of the day.

*This issue of BRUSH AND PENCIL completes the fourteenth volume and makes the magazine's year begin with the calendar year.



YACHT HARBOR
By Frank Duveneck
Shown at St. Louis World's Fair

So varying have been the conditions in the United States, so agitated the events of history in the century and one-half ago, that though the American citizen has developed an original type of manhood, it was for many decades difficult to find circles of culture governed by a national feeling and teeming with ideals and characteristics distinctively American. Art students sought centers abroad for inspiration and congenial companionship, and unwillingly returned with foreign accent and alien ways of thinking. Originality was lost for the time being under the imitation and fashion of established schools. But as the spirit of nationality matured, the American citizen artist translated his individuality into his work. Not for him was the local color and picturesque accessories of the Dutch school; nor the rusticity of an ancient peasant class, patiently tilling its fields and watching its flocks; nor the fervor of an established religion, with marvelous temples and storied history; nor the polished example and sacred dignity of a royal academy. The native American artist must seek for his material amid changing scenes and in an uncongenial and unsympathetic atmosphere, and if he seeks to interpret nature, it must be from a personal point of view, for no precedent points the way. Gone were the rules of the past, gone the opinions of the schools; with growing liberty he felt the power to create for himself, to picture and to model his own ideas influenced by his associations.

His themes must be on the plane of universal sympathy, his expression that of the earnest and devoted American addressing the world.

Bearing this in mind, the reviewer entered the lofty galleries of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, housing the works of American art. A brief survey was convincing. After studying the French section on one hand and the German on the other, it was very evident that the gathering of canvases by artists claiming the birthright of the United States marked an epoch in national art. What he beheld was cosmopolitan, and yet back of all influence was a vigor and energy differing from any expression of continental art. It was courageous, naïve, and occidental. It searched for breadth and eliminated the trivial. Barring the dilettante playing with echoes of foreign studios and disciples of masters who had won laurel wreaths in other lands, the impression was that of an art in progress, with no presumption of having attained perfection.

The arrangement of frames against the soft green tapestried walls was made with a respect for values, and the scheme of classification adopted by Director Ives was interesting, if not discernible by all. By this method in the galleries to the left, nearest the German section, were displayed the work of American artists schooled in



ALONG LONG ISLAND SOUND

By John F. Stacey

Shown at St. Louis World's Fair

Germany, and to the right, approaching the French section, were canvases by American artists who had been molded in Parisian atmospheres. Not many, however, stop to consider psychological impressions or to moralize. This is more the task of the philosopher than of the seeker after beauty. Wherein is my joy, what pleases my eye, what is the message of the artist whose gift it is to look beyond the sheathing of the commonplace into the soul of things material?

Yielding to the spell born of occasion, no disappointment awaited the pilgrim in the American section. He had passed his hours in the galleries with Teutonic temper and talent visible on all sides; he had stood before the awe-inspiring tableaux of battles; and bowed in the presence of royalty and meetings of doughty warriors. Crossing the Rhine, he had been admitted to the Gallic world of fancy. And now about him in this central pavilion were works by other hands vital with the spontaneity of youth, heralding themes of confidence and hope that make an individual appeal for appreciation. Here were notes of distinction, a grace indefinable. It is true that the numbers of canvases were overwhelming, and the quality ran the gamut of merit, all the way from inexperienced crudity to scholarly



THE OLD MILL

By T. E. Steele

Shown at St. Louis World's Fair



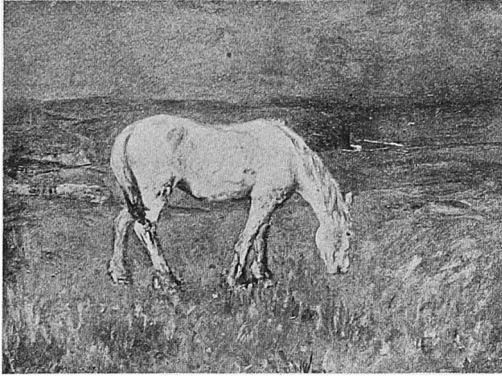
FROSTY MORNING

By Bruce Crane

Shown at St. Louis World's Fair

finish in technique. But this may be forgiven owing to the proclaimed policy of Director Ives and the art committee whose object was to draw out a generous representation of American art, not from the well-known centers exclusively, but from the retired studios, wherever talent aspired for recognition. This catholic generosity ruled the policy of Karl Bitter as well, and nearly every known sculptor in the land contributed his genius to the decoration of buildings and grounds, and the value of such encouragement cannot be overestimated. The stimulus will abide in American ateliers for many a long day, and the progress of the next century will owe a debt to the impetus of exhibition and encouragement.

It is but natural that portraiture and figure-painting should attract the interests of the majority—and these canvases were many—in the American galleries. To the alert student humanity is far more interesting than nature, and the spirit of the age is first of all one of activity among men. The portrait-painter is sustained by popular favor, he is certain of appreciation. According to his fancy or his ambition, he may practice realism or follow art far into the prettiness of decoration and charming picture-making. Technical facility and intelligent observation point the highways to success. But think not that these are all that make for true expression in art, or that seek



VIEUX CHEVAL SUR LA LANDE

By Charles Cottet

Shown at St. Louis World's Fair

the unquenchable spark of genius illuminating the mask of line and color. The gift of divination alone could have penetrated the bewitching loveliness of womanhood, or grasped elusive personality to enshrine upon canvas so that all who run may read. Neither Briton nor Frenchman would have painted with similar frankness and sensi-

bility; one would have been true to his venerated tradition, and the other lost in his inherent passion for obtrusive spectacular effect.

John W. Sargent's group of the "Three Misses Hunter" had the place of dignity upon the walls, and perhaps demanded homage before all others, though opinion respecting it differs widely. It had thus won the honors of two continents. If grace appeals to the eyes, its finish brings more glory to the painter. Near the center of the opposite wall was the full-length study of a woman, "Rosa Corder," by Whistler. Its gentle tonality is restful, its impressive simplicity speaks more loudly than flaring pigments, and reminds us that the daring use of flat tones by this



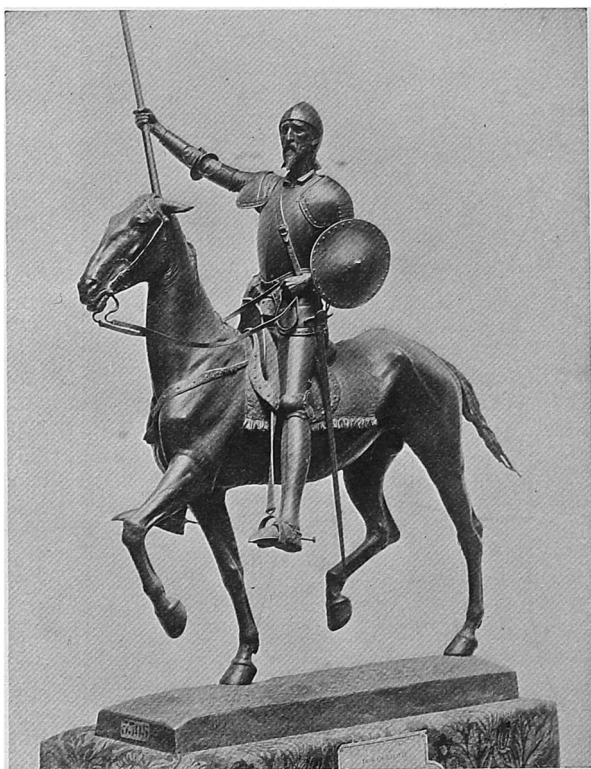
HUBBARD MEMORIAL—THANATOS

By Karl Bitter

Shown at St. Louis World's Fair

aggressive American sent a message around the world, and wrought a miraculous change in the views of the century—a change which has awakened the gratitude of art-lovers the land over. Gladly we note

his disciples on every side. Fully as striking for freedom in picture-making and in following ideas of his own, were the graceful decorative portraits of fair women by John W. Alexander. Looking still farther for distinction, equal but on another plane, were the aristocratic portraits by Cecilia Beaux—foremost among women artists on this side of the Atlantic. Looking still farther among



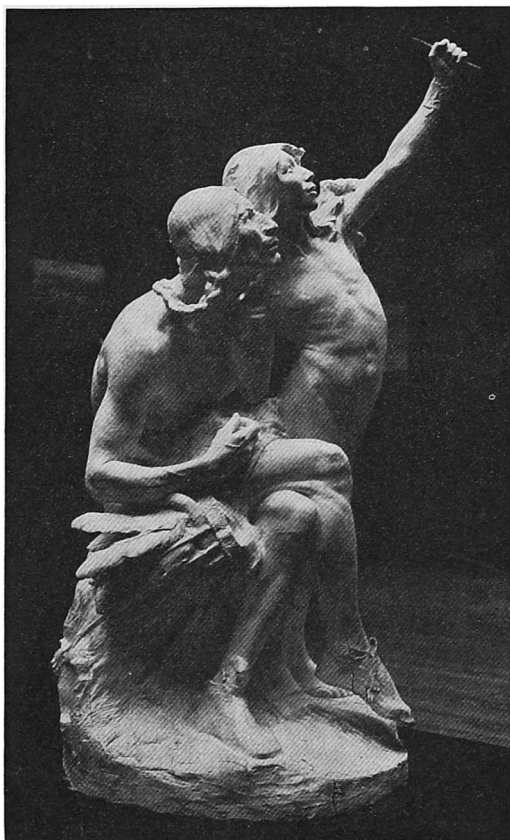
DON QUIXOTE

By C. E. Dallin

Shown at St. Louis World's Fair

the score and more canvases by artists whose names are familiar to all visitors of national exhibitions there was discovered an American type and quality of portrayal not in accord with the methods of the French and Germans, and a technique striving to produce effects without outraging the tenets of art. Finally was formed the conclusion that in portraiture at least the American section had reached a place of achievement above that of other nations. Beauty is not the sole excuse for being. Character delineation has been treated

with respect for its possibilities. Much might be learned from exploits in method, contrasts were numerous. There was food for reflection in the analysis of personality by Sargent, the suggestive



THE SUN-VOW

By Herman McNeill

Shown at St. Louis World's Fair

use of tone by Whistler, the harmonies of Alexander, the breezy atmospheres of Frank Benson, the insistence of Irving Wiles, of Robert Henri, of W. M. Chase, of Douglas Volk, Robert Vonnoh, and De Forest Brush, the realism of Gari Melchers, and the refinement of Cecilia Beaux.

Overlooking eccentricity in composition, the material study of city and architecture, the story-telling and purely decorative canvas, and the memory of Venetian or Oriental days—not forgetting to linger before the gorgeous Eastern life so happily limned by the late Edwin Lord Weeks, we came finally to the test of American art—the sympathetic portrayal of nature in landscape or ma-

rine view. This sphere in art makes large demands on the power of an artist. Here is called into play a passion for nature, a fine feeling for subtle quality, an ability to portray real emotion. Trickery avails not, the very essence of the personality of the painter vitalizes the strokes of his brush, and the disposal of his colors. Calling to the

mental vision the message of Inness and the alluring invitations of the Nocturne of Whistler—especially of the Southampton Water—are we not prepared to assert this as a truth? Comparison, even of a superficial order, of the landscapes of the American section with those of the Swedish, the English, the French, and the German reveals this: that the differences are not those of subject, of heather-clad hills, prairie or dune or fjord, but differences of national expression, and that one is truly as American as historians describe the American.

Our American landscape-artists go to nature and practice the art of elimination more than the



PORTRAIT OF MRS. CHARLES GRAFLY
By Charles Grafly
Shown at St. Louis World's Fair



THE END OF THE DAY
By Sergeant Kendall
Shown at St. Louis World's Fair

art of construction. Their treatment is as a rule free from affectation, impressionism, or mysticism. A sane feeling of balance and counterpoise meets the imagination, yet they have the rarer virtues of temperament and vivacity so vital in the appeal for appreciation. While the critic may be inclined to cavil with certain ones over a lack of reserve and formalism, that lack is overbalanced by a rugged strength and definition of Titanic grandeur

such as appears in the paintings of New England's cliffs and deep sea studies of Winslow Homer and the marines of John H. Woodbury. Dramatic instinct has gone to great lengths. In another key, but as powerful to those susceptible to sensitive impressions, were the tone paintings of the Palisades, by Van Dearing Perrine. Their large qualities have been accomplished by the simplest means; the breadth of comprehension and treatment marks an onward stride in American art. For themes tender, yet intense and impassioned, we needed but to look to the art of the late A. H. Wyant, whose career remains as one of the best examples of the evolution of the American artist, and among those whose sympathy has won an art rich in poetic meaning with elusive beauty of moonlight and twilight atmospheres, to Ben Foster's works. Closely allied to these in sincerity and artistic penetration were the canvases of Leonard Ochtman, whose refined art will ever appeal to the few. Then how admirable was the scintillating brilliancy shown in the canvas of Charles H. Davis, and the individual strength of the work of D. W. Tryon. Counting with these were groups of landscape painters in the eastern and western centers plainly working toward an ideal end. While following them one should bear in mind the youth of American art, and the short years of its encouragement.

The secret of the landscape is theirs, it fascinates the eye in selective composition, and in harmonious coloring. It is not translation, but interpretation. Do not despair if the number of those who have truly arrived was not great, take the showing of the exposition as evidence of promise. It was evinced in the display of water-colors, in the splendid exhibition of illustrations, in the higher skill of etching and engraving. Never before had there been gathered under one roof so comprehensive an assertion of the progress of American art as this at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. In temper it was as varied and as versatile as the American citizen, the point of view had the elements of originality, the grasp hinted of universality born of a national strength made up of the gifts of many, many nations. Repose and polish will come with age, and the hope of the present lies in the energy of ambition, effort, and the persistence of the study and industry of the artist. Freeing the mind from prejudiced opinions as to what should be, it was discovered that there was a wealth of art to enjoy in present American accomplishments. These were exhibited for popular judgment, and the united verdict is that American art has emerged from the chrysalis and come at last into its own.

LENA M. MCCAULEY.